

## Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 DRC-01 /122 W  
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R 171748Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0474

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: RH, UK

SUBJECT: FCO SKEPTICISM CONCERNING PRESS REPORTS OF  
IMMINENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN ANC AND IAN SMITH

1. SUMMARY. ON MAY 16 THE TIMES AND THE FINANCIAL TIMES

TIMES BOTH CARRIED ARTICLES FROM THEIR SALISBURY COR-  
RESPONDENTS, THE FORMER CLAIMING THAT AN AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN THE ANC AND IAN SMITH WAS IN SIGHT WHILE THE  
LATTER CHARACTERIZED THESE REPORTS AS RUMORS AND EX-  
PRESSED SKEPTICISM AS TO THEIR ACCURACY. AN OFFICER OF  
THE RHODESIA OFFICE AT THE FCO COMMENTED TO AN EMBASSY  
OFFICER THAT THE FINANCIAL TIMES ARTICLE IS  
THE MOST ACCURATE COMMENTARY ON THE PRESENT SITUATION.  
END SUMMARY.

2. THE TIMES FOR MAY 16 CARRIED A FRONT PAGE CENTER

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ARTICLE FROM MICHAEL KNIPE DATED SALISBURY MAY 15,

ENTITLED "AFRICAN ACCORD WITH MR. SMITH NOW IN SIGHT."  
ACCORDING TO KNIPE, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE ANC  
WILL MEET NEXT MONTH TO CONSIDER SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSALS  
FOR A SETTLEMENT. AFTER ADMITTING "INFORMED SOURCES" IN  
SALISBURY WERE RELUCTANT TO COMMENT, KNIPE CLAIMED  
"AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ANC AND MR. SMITH'S GOVERNMENT IS  
CLEARLY CLOSE AND IS EXPECTED TO PAVE THE WAY FOR  
RHODESIA'S INDEPENDENCE TO BE FORMALLY RECOGNIZED BY  
BRITAIN AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY." SUBSEQUENTLY,  
KNIPE ESTIMATED PROSPECTS FOR SUCH AN AGREEMENT AS "EX-  
TREMELY DELICATE" AND CLAIMED THERE IS "FEAR" IN SALIS-  
BURY THAT "ELEMENTS" IN THE ANC BELIEVE THAT EVENTS IN  
PORTUGAL HAVE STRENGTHENED THE ANC AND WEAKENED SMITH.  
KNIPE FURTHER QUOTES VISITING JOHNS HOPKINS PROFESSOR  
JOHN HUTCHINSON AS CLAIMING THE ANC IS "BEYOND DOUBT OR  
CHALLENGE THE VOICE OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE" AND HAS THE  
RIGHT TO HAVE ITS CONTRACTUAL WORD ACCEPTED IN BRITAIN  
AND ABROAD. HUTCHINSON IS FURTHER QUOTED AS SAYING THE  
US SHOULD ALSO "LEND ITS VOICE" AS US "SUPPORT FOR A  
RATIFIED AGREEMENT WILL MEAN A GREAT DEAL IN RHODESIA  
AND THE REST OF AFRICA."

3. THE FINANCIAL TIMES ON THE SAME DAY HAS A REPORT  
FROM TONY HAWKINS ALSO DATELINED SALISBURY MAY 15, WHICH  
TAKES A MUCH LESS ENTHUSIASTIC LINE ON REPORTS OF AN  
AGREEMENT WHICH HAWKINS CHARACTERIZES AS RUMORS.  
"SOURCES CLOSE TO THE ANC" ACCORDING TO THE FINANCIAL  
TIMES, WERE RELUCTANT TO AGREE THAT THE TWO SIDES ARE  
CLOSE TO AGREEMENT" WHICH THEY SAW AS "TOO PREMATURE A  
CONCLUSION" ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF BISHOP MUZOREWA'S  
PLEDGE TO PUT THE TERMS OF ANY AGREEMENT TO THE AFRICAN  
PEOPLE. THIS ARTICLE CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT IF THERE  
IS TO BE ANY AGREEMENT SMITH MUST HAVE MADE "RADICAL  
CONCESSIONS" PERHAPS AS A RESULT OF ANXIETY OVER  
DEVELOPMENTS IN MOZAMBIQUE.

4. AN OFFICER OF THE RHODESIA DEPARTMENT AT THE FCO  
COMMENTED TO AN EMBOFF THAT THE TIMES ARTICLE WAS "PURE  
SPECULATION" AND THAT THE FINANCIAL TIMES STORY THROWING  
COLD WATER ON RUMORS OF AN IMMINENT AGREEMENT WAS NEARER  
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THE MARK. HE ADDED THAT THE FCO HAD NO INTIMATION  
THAT AN AGREEMENT WAS NEAR AND IF IT WAS MUZOREWA WOULD  
HARDLY HAVE WAITED UNTIL THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF  
THE ANC CENTRAL COMMITTEE NEXT MONTH TO TAKE IT UP WITH  
PARTY OFFICIALS.

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